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Correspondence.

A BAS-RELIEF EXPLAINED.

SIR: Please give an explanation of Thorwaldsen's "Love of Ages." J. R. H., New York.

ANSWER.—The subject of this celebrated bas-relief was suggested to Thorwaldsen by the famous picture of "The Sale of Loves" found at Stabiæ, and he called it "The Ages of Love." In Thorwaldsen's work Psyche plays the part of saleswoman, and distributes the little Loves from a cage by her side according to the ages of the applicants. A child innocently approaches to play with them, a little girl timidly caresses them, another, older, kneels behind her. A young maiden is kissing the one she has received, and an older woman holds by the wings of the Love which is sleeping. On the shoulders of a man has alighted a Love, which seems to be too great a burden for him to carry. Farther on, one flies laughing away from an old man, who vainly stretches out his hands to catch it, and so on. In this way, Thorwaldsen develops with cleverness and ingenuity the idea that Love is the great passion which reigns over the human race, from childhood to old age.

SCRATCH WORK ON CHINA.

SIR: Please add to the information you have already given concerning "Scratch Work in China Decoration," by answering a few questions. (1) Would the medallions of color, if applied in that way, admit of shading as a plaque is sometimes shaded? (2) Please mention names and prices of the tube paints suitable for a ground for etching. Also cost. (3) Must gold tracery be applied before or after firing? (4) Would the quality of the china have anything to do with the nicety of the result? (5) Would the china after etching require immediate firing, or could it remain safely several months? (6) Could a mottled medallion be obtained of red-brown and violet, and what other colors could be combined, if any? By answering these questions you will greatly oblige one to whom china-painting has seemed as impracticable as to cry for the moon.

MRS. D. B. S., San Bernardino, Cal.

ANSWER.—(1) The medallions admit of the same shading that is used in a plaque. (2) The Lacroix colors suitable for such purposes are, among others, ivory-black, deep-red-brown, ruby-purple, blue-green, brown 108, capucine-red, and crimson lake. The prices of these range from eighteen to sixty cents a tube. Of Lycett's dry colors, mauve, ivory-black, red-brown, rose, and brown may be used, costing twenty-five cents a bottle. (3) Gold should be applied before the final firing, and should be spread on thickly with a small stiff brush, avoiding strokes. (4) The very best quality of French china should be used in painting to insure a good result. (5) The china need not be fired immediately; if guarded from dust or defacement it may be kept any length of time. (6) The combination mentioned could be applied to a medallion for a background. Any colors may be combined except reds. The best way to acquire facility in china painting, if no teacher is available, is to procure some good elementary book on the subject and study for yourself. Among others is an excellent little manual for overglaze painting by Miss M. Louise McLaughlin.

HINTS FOR OIL PAINTINGS.

SIR: Will you please answer the following queries: (1) What is the method in oil painting termed "glazing"? (2) What colors in oil are best for painting summer foliage? (3) Is it best to use under tints for ground and foliage, and if so what colors are advisable? N. M. W., Oberlin, O.

ANSWER.—(1) Glazing is used by artists of the modern schools generally, only as a last resort, and is rarely taught as an orthodox method. It consists in changing the entire tone of a picture or part of a picture by the application of some one color made transparent by some medium—such as oil. Scumbling is using an opaque color in the same way. Lighter tones are obtained by scumbling, and darker by glazing. For instance, let us say, a landscape when finished appears too cold in general tone to the painter, who does not wish to repaint solidly the whole picture; he therefore takes some good transparent yellow, and mixing it with oil, goes over the whole surface of the canvas with the color, using a short, strong bristle brush, and rubbing the color well in. When finished, the whole effect of the picture will be much warmer in tone; this shows the result of glazing when done in the proper way. (2) For warm greens use zinober (light), and for lightest tones add cadmium (Schönfeld's) and a little vermilion, with what white is necessary. For richer tones, add Antwerp blue, raw umber, and burnt Sienna. (3) In oil painting no under tint is necessary; the tones should all be laid in at first with regard to their general values, accents and details being sought in successive paintings until completion is reached.

SUBSTITUTES FOR FUGITIVE PIGMENTS.

SIR: If Prussian blue, chrome yellow, lamp-black, and flake white are fugitive colors, will you tell us through your invaluable journal the best possible substitutes for them—particularly for the two first. (2) Are the oxides fugitive—oxide of chromium for instance? P. CLARK, Sylvania, Ga.

ANSWER.—(1) Instead of Prussian blue use a *good* ultramarine or Antwerp blue. For chrome yellow, substitute chromate of strontia (strontian yellow); for lamp-black use ivory black, and zinc white for flake white. (2) The oxides of chromium, when unadulterated, are among the safest pigments known. We may add that in spite of the risks attending the use of flake white it is so valuable a pigment that it is difficult to get artists to adopt any other white as a substitute. Devoe's flake white, we notice in a circular before us, is highly commended by Professor Wilmarth of the New York National Academy of Design.

PHOTO-ENGRAVING.

SIR: Could you tell me how photo-engraving is done, or could you refer me to some book on the subject? I cannot get any information of the art at all out here.

W. H. J., Kansas City, Mo.

ANSWER.—Photo-engraving is a semi-secret process. The principle consists in so treating the gelatine film of a photographic negative as to get from it a relief plate from which one can print as from ordinary metal type. No book so far as we know describes the process.

A KANSAS ASPIRANT.

SIR: What would be the chance for a young man to find a situation in some artist's studio in New York, that would keep him in board and clothes? Not having enough money to attend an art school, I should like such an opportunity to learn, by simply keeping my eyes open and paying my way by any work that I could do about the premises. If you think such a thing possible, what part of the year would be best to commence?

P., Independence, Kan.

ANSWER.—The chances we should say are not favorable; but we print our correspondent's letter on the possibility of some artist wishing to engage him, in which case we will give the young man's name. We notice by the printed heading of his letter that "P." is now engaged in "enlarging portraits from photographs in crayon or ink."

ABBREVIATIONS AS TO PRINTS.

SIR: In notices of the publication of new English prints what do the following abbreviations signify? (1) A. P. 250 at 5 gs.; (2) B. L. 50 at 3 gs.; (3) L. P. India 100 at 4 gs.; (4) A. P. I. 75 at £6. READER, Boston.

ANSWER.—(1) A. P. at 5 gs. means artist proof at 5 guineas; (2) B. L. means proof before letters; (3) L. P. means lettered proof; (4) A. P. I. means artist proof on India paper.

PAINTING ON VELVET.

S. M. A., Lexington, Mo.—In painting on velvet, though water colors are preferred by some, the most excellent and effective work is done with oil colors. If water colors are used, they should be opaque or mixed with Chinese white. These come already prepared in glass boxes, or can be mixed at home. First carefully outline the design on velvet, and fill in the whole ground to be painted with Chinese white. When thoroughly dry, paint over this with the colors desired, taking care that each painting should be dry before the next is applied. A little pure glycerine mixed with the colors will prevent them from cracking or crumbling. If oil colors are to be employed, either put them on blotting paper to absorb the oil before using, or mix with a special medium such as is sold by Bragdon & Fenetti, New York. Then proceed with the painting the same as on canvas.

"GOUACHE" AND "AQUARELLE."

P. A., Chicago.—The difference between "gouache" and "water-color" proper is that in the former the artist may have a colored background upon which he puts on the lights in successive layers, while in "aquarelle" (or water-color painting) working upon a white ground, he reserves the white for the lights of the picture, and instead of putting on the colors in successive layers, he washes them. In gouache he uses body color, such as Chinese white, giving solidity to the tints, but at the sacrifice of delicacy and transparency, in which lie the great charm of a water-color.

HOW TO STAIN WOODWORK.

P. B., Philadelphia.—The process of staining is very simple, and only requires the stain, and patient energy; the woodwork must be free from all grease, and be rubbed with fine sand-paper or brown paper to a smooth surface. The stain, if black, should be put on with a broad smooth brush quickly and evenly, leaving no time for patchy marks; several coats are required, with time left between for the perfect drying of the wood, and the gentle rubbing down with paper. When a tone of perfect blackness is obtained, the wood is ready for the French-polish, the application of which to be effectual, requires patience above all things. The polish should be poured on to the wood in small quantities only, and rubbed diligently round and round, with soft linen or silken rags, until a slight feeling of stickiness is felt, when a little more polish must be added. Much labor is required to produce the transparent surface that, once gained, lasts for long years. If a green color is wished, the number of coats of stain should be limited by the desired tone. Oak wood stained with two coats of green, and then one of black, and French-polished, has a charming effect for tables or shelves.

"FIRING" CLAY MODELS.

S. F., New York.—(1) "Terra cotta" is literally clay baked. (2) The operation of burning or firing a clay model may be performed without difficulty in such a portable kiln as is used for firing china paintings. Having placed the work to be fired in the kiln, the lid should be luted down or stopped with soft clay. Then light the fire, place the kiln on it, and gradually fill it up with fuel so that it is embedded, as it were, for quite two inches all round, but with no heat at the top. The small hole in the stopper should be free. When the whole has become of a white heat, and this may be in an hour or more, according to the size of the kiln used and the size of the fire, the heat may be allowed to subside, and after the fire has gone out, the kiln or muffle can be removed. Let it stand a day before you take it out, so that the air may not be admitted too soon (for in that case the work will be almost sure to crack), and then the medallion or other model has become terra cotta.

TO FIX A CHARCOAL DRAWING.

S. T., Trenton.—The best way to fix a charcoal drawing is in the old fashion, from behind. Stretch the paper on a frame and apply a very weak solution of gum-lac in spirits of wine, the color of pale sherry, and perfectly fluid, so as to enter easily the pores of the paper. Pulverizers are used to throw the "fixative" in a jet of very fine spray upon the face of the drawing; but the result, we have noticed, is seldom satisfactory.

TRANSFERRING DESIGNS.

MRS. W. L. J., Denver, Col.—Designs may be transferred in several ways. For a rough material like plush or velvet, prick holes with a large pin at short distances in the outline of the pattern, and then pass a small bag filled with powdered starch lightly over the holes, taking care not to move the pattern. The whole design will be reproduced on the material beneath, outlined in small dots, which can be easily connected with a fine brush filled with Chinese white, making the outline complete. For a smooth material such as linen, impression paper should be placed between the paper pattern and the material, and when the outline of the design is carefully traced with a sharp-pointed stick, it will be found perfectly transferred to the linen beneath. This paper can be procured in sheets of black, blue, and red, from any dealer in art materials.

PAINTING ON WOOD.

J. McM., Woodville, Miss.—(1) In painting on wood in oil colors, it is an advantage to oil the wood first with linseed or poppy oil; when dry, paint directly upon the wood. After the painting is completed varnish with French retouching varnish which will give a finish. (2) If oil colors are used on a black panel, no under painting is necessary; simply lay on the colors in their general tones, using as much paint as possible to prevent the black ground from showing through. (3) If water colors are to be used, first cover the whole ground of the design with a coating of Chinese white, after which the colors will be found very easy to manage.

SUNDRY QUERIES ANSWERED.

L. R. D., Albany, N. Y.—An excellent book for those wishing to learn fresco painting is "Mural Decoration," by T. Goodwin, published by Winsor & Newton, and imported by all large art dealers. This is simple and practical and suitable for a beginner.

ARTIST, East Cleveland, O.—(1) Illustrations for magazines are made with pen and ink, or with an oiled crayon on prepared paper, for the ordinary processes of reproduction merely. When the drawing is to be engraved, the artist has more freedom in the choice of material. In this case, black and white oil paints may be used or Nash drawings made with India ink and Chinese white. Even a pencil drawing well executed is acceptable for an illustration. (2) The prices range from $5 to $100 according to the excellence and importance of the work.

C. L. J., Utica.—(1) Hancock's powdered colors may be used in combination with the Lacroix colors, under some circumstances—but it is better for novices not to attempt such combinations without special instructions from an expert. (2) "Williams' Gold Paint" is considered an excellent article, and "Bessemer's Gold" is also very good.

TREATMENT OF THE SUPPLEMENT DESIGNS.

PLATE CCXXIX. is a group of cherubs. They may be painted together on a large panel or plaque, or separately on tiles or small plaques. If the design is painted on china make the ground sky-blue; wings, white shaded with gray and blue; heads, according to the usual rules, making some blond and others brune. The corners are flowers in natural colors on a dark ground.

Plate CCXXX. is a design for a vase—"Apple Blossoms." Make the background of celeste-blue, adding pearl-gray at the base, or making the same color deeper. This can be done when the whole is painted by stippling with a small brush between the leaves and flowers. Mix a gray with chrome-green and carmine No. 1. Paint the edge of the petals and the shading of the flowers and buds with this. Use carmine alone on the buds and the tips of some of the flower petals. Paint the young leaves and the calyxes of buds and flowers in apple-green, shaded with grass-green; leaves, grass-green and brown-green, adding brown 4 or 17, dark green No. 7 for shading; stems, of green shaded with brown.

Plate CCXXXI., a design for a cup and saucer—"Birds and Pine Needles"—would look well with no background. A buff background would be pretty, however, and, if put on, need not be erased for the painting. The design can be drawn with lead pencil when the tint is dried. Use yellow ochre, yellow brown, or sepia for the background. Wash the birds with sepia and a little ultramarine mixed. Paint with this color over the background, lightly, so as not to disturb the tint. Darken the wings, bill, eyes, and tail with brown 4 or 17. Paint the pine needles in grass-green, darkened at the stem with green No. 7. If too dark, mix grass-green with it. Paint stems in brown 4 or 17. A touch of carmine or violet of iron at the little knobs on the stem, would add to the effect of the whole. This design may also be made useful for outline embroidery and sketching on linen.

Plate CCXXXII. is a collection of borders for book illumination. Directions for this work are given in THE ART AMATEUR for June and July, 1882.

Plate CCXXXIII. is an ecclesiastical embroidery design from a sixteenth century Spanish cope of red velvet, preserved in the Cluny Museum. The design shown is one of the six orphreys done in silk and fine gold. The design in THE ART AMATEUR for December was from the collar of the same vestment.

Plate CCXXXIV. is a design of seventeen tiles for a fire-place facing, composed for THE ART AMATEUR by C. M. Jenckes. Paint the straight band and the circular band on the tiles dark brown, lining on the edges with brown 4 or 17. The vases at the base paint with dark red brown or capucine red and purple No. 2; this will make a dark red. Paint the conventional design with the same, adding black to make a deeper color; do not use black alone. Make the ivy stems brown, lining on the shadow side with 4 or 17. Smaller leaves, grass-green; larger ones, chrome-green and orange mixed to a warm deep green—occasionally paint a brown green leaf, shading at the stems with dark green No. 7, added to the leaf color. Mix a gray with ultramarine, carmine, and yellow for the owls; add black to this gray for shading the same; bring out the eyes and beak with black. The design of grapes on one vase can be painted with the colors of the vase itself; or make the leaves grass-green and the grapes rich purple, with a little capucine red added, to make them more in harmony with surrounding tints. The holly on the right-hand vase paint in local colors, or with leaves of grass-green, and berries capucine red, shaded with purple No. 2. The ground of the tiles can be left white, or, when the whole is finished, can be stippled in yellow ochre, apple-green, dark red-brown, sepia, or sky-blue.

Plate CCXXXV. is a design of "Jasmine" for an embroidered screen-panel, the third of a series of four contributed to THE ART AMATEUR by the Royal School of Art Needlework, at South Kensington. It is to be worked on satin in silk, natural colors. Full suggestions for treatment and an illustration of the screen in miniature will be found in the November number, page 129. The designs for the first and second panels were published in the November and December numbers respectively, and the fourth will appear in the February issue.

IN painting the design on page 40, on china, observe the following suggestions: *First Firing.* Draw in the outlines with carmine or burnt sienna (water colors). Make the shadows in the face and hands of one fourth yellow brown, one fourth deep blue green, and one half gray violet of iron, using a little more brown under the chin. Eyes, pupil gray violet of iron mixed with deep blue green; iris deep blue green shaded with the pupil mixture. Lips, rouge chair No. 1, used thin; also touch the nostril with rouge chair. Hair, yellow brown. Head and neck drapery shaded with pearl gray, leaving white of the china for the high lights. Dress, ruby purple thin for the deep shadows, and carmine No. 2 for the lights. Girdle, carmine No. 2. Yellow ochre for chain at neck and girdle, also for clasp of book. Puffs at shoulder and wrists, alternate ruby purple, and carmine No. 2. Sleeves, same as dress. Take a sharp stick and scrape out the embroidery, leaving it white until the second firing. Book cover, yellow brown; edge (gold color) silver yellow. *Second Firing.* Background, brown green, deepened with brown No. 4; allow the background to dry before proceeding with the figure. Tint the face with a mixture of carnation No. 2 and ivory yellow. Use carnation pure for the cheeks. Stipple all together while soft; a drop of oil of lavender or cloves will keep the mixture soft long enough to stipple nicely. While soft brush in a little yellow brown in the reflected lights; also apply the same to the hands. Shade the hair with brown No. 4. Shade the pupil of the eye with gray violet of iron; for the white of the eye use the same, only thinner. Shade the lips with carnation No. 1 and gray violet of iron, the upper lip a little darker than lower. Deepen the shadows of the dress with ruby purple. Touch in the embroidery with yellow ochre, shade the jewelry with yellow ochre and ruby purple mixed. Shadow on the book, brown No. 4; on the edge of the leaves, gray violet of iron. High lights on the white drapery, white enamel.

THE acme of domestic concord is reached in the musical call-bell. That instrument generally serves to convey an imperative summons to the butler's pantry, by a shrewish ring. How differently the temper of the servant will be affected by the moving notes of a merry waltz, and how deftly he will move to this pizzicato polka from the new musical call-bell which Messrs. M. J. Paillard & Co. have introduced, every prudent householder will find out for himself.